

Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee – Minutes
March 16, 2010
Mid-County Regional Services – 2424 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Members Present: Ciliny Alce, Gregory Baker, Melissa Brown, Eleanor Duckett, Regina Dull, Manuel Hidalgo, Chelsea Johnson, Larysa Kurylas, Zoe Lefkowitz, Christopher Lindsay, Leslie McDermott, Thomas Martin, and Susan Petersen,

Members Absent: Maureen Carrington, Jonathan Fink, Sara Lappano, Diane Lynne, James Mensah, Patrick Naehu, Erin Roberts, David Taghipour, and Fran Ware

County Staff: Rob Klein, Pete McGinnity and Sharon Lasswell for Wheaton Redevelopment;

Guests: Ed Murtaugh and Elizabeth Chaisson, for GreenWheaton; Taylor Brown, for Wheaton Patch; Dana Davidson for Chesapeake Public Strategies; Steve Simon for Simon Public Relations; Susan DeFord, Robert Wulff for B.F. Saul; Luis Estrada, Sandra Tallant for MNCPPC; Andrew Bzdega, student; Jeannette Feldner, WUDAC; Filippo Leo for Marchone's Italian Deli; Dan Sheveiko for KHCA; Joseph Horgan

Meeting Called to Order by the Chair, Mr. Baker, at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION to approve the February minutes was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Ms. Alce. All were in favor and minutes were approved.

Redevelopment Report – Mr. Klein

- March 23 @ 7:30 p.m. - County Executive will hold a Town Hall Meeting at Crossway Community, Inc. on Upton Drive in Kensington.
- March 21 @ 7:00 p.m. - Washington Properties held a public meeting in preparation for Preliminary and Site Plan hearings at the Planning Board, which the developer anticipates, will occur in late summer. The public meeting followed District Council's rezoning approval to Transit Station-Residential (TS-R), and allows up to 245 residential units.
- March 30 @ 7:00 p.m. - BB&T held a public meeting at Mid-County Regional Services Center in preparation for Preliminary and Site Plan hearings for in preparation for Preliminary and Site Plan hearings at the Planning Board for the construction of a BB&T branch with a drive-up. District Council for the County Council approved BB&T Bank's Development Plan Amendment for the proposed project earlier this year.
- On March 31, the Planning Board approved the Draft of the Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan for submission to the County Council. The Sector Plan will be transmitted to the County Council and the County Executive on April 15. Public Hearings will be set later in the summer.
- Safeway/Patriot groundbreaking is possible in early summer. The store will open first, in mid-2012, followed by the apartments a year later.

- Mr. McGinnity spoke briefly about upcoming WRAC vacancies and the recruitment process. Recruitment will begin around April 15 and lasts about two months.

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B.F. Saul Updates

Mr. Wulff provided an update, on the progress of the Concept Plan that B.F. Saul gave to the public team (Montgomery County, WMATA) last Friday. The Concept Plan has not been approved by the Public Team. It is a plan that B.F. Saul believes is feasible. B.F. Saul has been reviewing cost issues with Clark Construction Company and is continuing to fine-tune the plan, which as noted above, is not yet approved. Once the Concept Plan is approved by the County and WMATA, the next step is to present the plan to stakeholders.

Land values will be set , based on respective appraisals by B.F. Saul and the Public Team members, and a General Development Plan could then be executed, allowing site control to be transferred from the Public Team entities to B.F. Saul. Once Saul has a General Development Agreement and site control, they can begin the formal entitlement/development process.

Mr. Wulff noted there would continue to be changes to the concept Plan for the WMATA site as B.F. Saul works to attract tenants. Success in tenant attraction will drive the redevelopment at the WMATA site. The Concept for the WMATA site is driven by “market stakeholders.” Current plans call for 550- 600,000 sq. ft. of office space - built in two towers - 825 parking spaces, and 120 “key” hotel. Remaining space on the site will be “land-banked” for future residential high-rise apartments when market rates ensure feasibility. Street-level space on the Georgia Avenue side of the commercial office buildings is anticipated to be comprised of flex space, accommodating either retail or office, determined by market demand. This development will be accommodated through the construction of a podium over the WMATA Bus Bays, as there is no alternative for permanently relocating the Bus Bays. The podium will be built at grade-level to the Georgia Ave. to accommodate a 20-foot height for the WMATA Bus Bays, which will continue to arrive and depart via Veirs Mill Rd.

While construction occurs, the bus bays must be moved to a temporary location nearby – most likely Parking Lot 13, which will affect the timing of Parking Lot 13’s redevelopment. With ADA requirements, this will be complicated, but Mr. Wulff feels it can be done.

Mr. Wulff provided cross sections of the WMATA Bus Bay redevelopment site. He noted the plan shows 17 floors for the office towers, which includes 5 levels of parking. The Hotel will have 5 to 7 floors and a future residential tower would have 18 to 19 floors including various levels of parking. He noted that 5 levels of parking under the office towers are problematic, as that number of levels will not be attractive to tenants. B.F. Saul would like to build only 3 levels of parking, but the site footprint is too small to provide the 825 spaces for office parking on 3 levels. An addition to the WMATA parking garage across Veirs Mill is a possibility for mitigating this issue, but challenges exist. Alternative parking would need to be arranged for patrons of the WMATA garage while construction occurred, and there are also additional legal issues. Another issue is how to “camouflage” above grade parking decks and make them attractive.

The Concept Plan for Parking Lot 13 calls for 200-250 residential units over approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of retail/ restaurant space. There will be 2-3 levels of underground parking below Lot 13. The southern portion of the site will be where a Towns Square/public amenity space will be located. B.F. Saul will present their concept for the town square site after meetings with an ad hoc Town Square Advisory Group have concluded.

Mr. Wulff also described issues related to obtaining a left hand turn on Georgia Ave. so vehicles heading north on Georgia Ave. can access the project. This will require working with the State Highway Administration (SHA). Though a left hand turn is not required, it will make the site more appealing to prospective tenants.

Mr. Wulff also commented on ideas the Parking Lot 13 site. The B.F. Saul team envisions both sides of Grandview and Triangle Lane with attractive streetscapes. On Triangle Lane, the Saul team would like to create 2, one-way lanes, which would be accessed off Reddie Drive, “wrap” the project’s northern boundary and connect to Grandview Ave. Triangle lane would have an expanded sidewalk and parallel parking on one side. This could be accommodated by removing the existing “head-in” parking that now exists in front of each storefront on Triangle Lane. It would require the cooperation of each Triangle Lane property owner and business. Parking spaces that are lost in front of the stores could be replaced in the underground garage planned for the Lot 13 project. B.F. Saul believes the increased foot traffic on a remodeled Triangle Lane would compensate for any parking spaces that are lost. Grandview would remain a two way street.

The size of the town square has not been determined. Mr. Wulff noted they are designing the Town Square so that “form would follow function.” Once functions are determined, the size of the Town Square can be set. A space that is too big would feel empty and uninviting. Alternatively, a town square that is too small would not accommodate functions like the “Taste of Wheaton.” Mr. Baker mentioned that Mr. Wulff attended a Project Review Subcommittee meeting on March 9 and provided a similar presentation to the subcommittee.

Town Square Principals and Functions/Activities – Mr. Klein led the WRAC in identifying general principals and functions/activities the WRAC members would like for the new town square. The list is as follows:

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WRAC Town Center Brainstorming Activity (3/16/2011)	
Principles/Goals	Activities/Functions
Street Activation	Taste of Wheaton
Walkability	Farmers' Market
Bike Parking	Art Shows
Youth Activities	Performance Space
Green Space	World Of Montgomery
Usable In All 4 Seasons	Skateboarding
Fountain	Outdoor Movies

Multicultural Sensitivity	Outdoor Eating
WRAC Town Center Brainstorming Activity (continued)	
Scalable Space	Ice Skating/Hockey
Open Source Commerce (Street Vendors)	Chessboards
Safety	Parades
Signage/Orientation	Ice Cream Vendors
Full Public Use	Kiosk Space
	Food Trucks
	Plant or Book Fair
	Information Fairs
	Cook-off
	Battle of the Bands
	"Soapbox Corner"
	Puppet Theater
	Wine Tasting
	Exercise/Health Expo
	Drum Circle
	Dance
	Hair Show
	"Cupcake Wars"

The list will be and discussed at the initial Ad Hoc Town Square Meeting, which B.F. Saul and their architects for the project - Torti Gallas – will conduct on March 17.

WRAC Membership – Mr. McGinnity advised, due to term limits, several WRAC members terms will be expiring. The County will be seeking replacements in the next few months. Ideally, WRAC membership should broadly reflect the Wheaton community.

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Subcommittee Reports

Planning & Visioning – Mr. Martin reported that the subcommittee met on February 7. It continues to work on testimony related to CR Zone issues within the Sector Plan.

Project Review – Ms. Petersen reported the subcommittee met twice last month. It continues to refine a framework for tracking the progress of redevelopment projects finalize a template for developer meetings to ensuring that issues relevant to WRAC are addressed. The subcommittee met last week with B.F. Saul and Mr. Wulff and discussed the Site Plan and a few renderings. In lieu of subcommittees' March monthly meeting, members have been encouraged to will attend the Washington Property public meeting on March 21 and the BB&T public meeting on March 30.

Economic Development – Ms. Duckett reported they are working on the civic association and homeowner association group list and mapped it as best they could. They also discussed the Business and Residential Survey.

GreenWheaton – Mr. Murtagh reported the group is working toward becoming a non-profit. At its next meeting the group will discuss outreach. They are considering a ribbon cutting on the rainscape project.

Comments from Guests:

Dan Sheveiko – commented on Costco; Concerning the B.F. Saul Concept Plan, Mr. Sheveiko feels that leveling the pedestrian bridge with the podium to be constructed is crucial, and he would like to see the Ad Hoc Town Square Task Force meetings held in a public place.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Please note: your name will become public information, recorded in the minutes of this WRAC Committee meeting, which may be photocopied and disseminated to various groups, and may appear on the internet and become retrievable by internet search engines.”